

Caiden Stewart

My name is Caiden Stewart and I am a 14-year-old sophomore at Northwest Catholic High School in West Hartford.

When I was two, I was diagnosed with five of the eight common food allergies – all at the anaphylactic level – so I know firsthand the importance of school nurses to the safety and health of students. Having a school nurse on staff helped to alleviate some of my mom's concerns when sending me off to school.

The medical community generally advises that children younger than 13 do not carry and self-administer an Epi-Pen, so school nurses are critical because they can dispense life-saving medication in the event of an emergency, especially a life-threatening emergency such as anaphylaxis.

No parent wants to imagine receiving heartbreaking news from a school about his/her child because there was no nurse to aid in an emergency.

I understand that budgets are important, but our state budget should not be adjusted at the risk of safety to children, or by increasing costs for families who already sacrifice to provide educational options for their children.

Nurses should be a non-negotiable part of every school staff. Their presence can *literally* be the difference between life and death for a student with food allergies like me.

Should the lives of nonpublic school students be put at risk because their parents have chosen to educate them at a nonpublic school? That is not only terrifying to consider, but also unjust.

Fortunately, I am now old enough to carry my own Epi-pen, but what about those young students who cannot? What about their health and safety in a life-threatening emergency with no school nurse on site? I hope we never have to find out.

Please OPPOSE Governor's Bill 7150 Section 1.

Thank you.